

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Acre)

Code 655

DEFINITION

A route, travel-way or cleared area within a forest.

PURPOSES

- Provide access to forest stands for management
- Provide access for removal and collection of forest products
- Provide access to forested areas for recreation
- Minimize onsite and off-site damage to resources during periods of access

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On forested areas where management activities, harvesting or logging practices, for timber and non-timber products, and recreational access is needed; does not include *permanent* logging and access roads.

CRITERIA

GENERAL CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL PURPOSES

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to economically and efficiently accomplish the intended purpose and expected uses and equipment.

Trails and landings shall be configured to minimize adverse onsite and off-site impacts. Examples of impacts include accelerated erosion, riparian zone degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrology modification and other water resource damage. Other impacts are aesthetics or unsightliness, unacceptable damage to advance regeneration, damage to residual growing stock, wildlife habitat degradation or fragmentation, and restricted wildlife movement.

Timing and use of equipment will be commensurate with site and soil conditions in order to maintain site productivity and minimize soil erosion, displacement and compaction.

Construction of trails and landings is to be avoided during periods of soil saturation for soils that have limited trafficability when wet.

Trails and landings should not be located within Streamside Management Zones (SMZs) except when entering and leaving stream crossings.

Slash, debris and vegetative material left on the site after construction will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

Water bars, rolling dips, timber bridges, rock plunge pools, and other drainage measures for trails shall be of sufficient size, intervals and gradient for adequate drainage and erosion control. Refer to "Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality in Virginia Technical Guide" for design criteria.

Trails and landings shall be sufficiently revegetated to control erosion. Refer to Virginia

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Conservation Practice Standard, *Critical Area Planting* (Code 342).

Noxious plants will not be used for revegetation.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

CONSIDERATIONS

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities. Landings should be located first and kept as small as possible. Avoid long straight grades to reduce erosion potential.

Landings and trails may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings.

Landings and trails may be utilized as firebreaks.

Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas and wetlands.

Stream crossings should be at right angles to the stream and kept to a minimum as much as possible.

Vehicle fluids should be drained into a container when servicing equipment.

Forest trails and landings that are adjacent to public roads and highways should be planned and located in compliance with all state and local regulations regarding access and sight distances for public right-of-way.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

Specifications for revegetation of landings and trails should include species, timing and method of application. Refer to Virginia

Conservation Practice Standard *Critical Area Planting* (Code 342) for planting specifications.

Document the following:

- Purpose for the trail or landing
- Field location/Plan view with SMZs marked
- Length and width of trails and landings
- Slope calculations
- Design calculations (culverts, etc.)
- Seeding specifications
- Operations and maintenance plans
- Location and spacing of waterbars and/or broad-based dips

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and where necessary repairs will be made. Trash or illegal dumps will not be allowed to accumulate on the site.

Landings and trails utilized as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose.

Landings and trails may be closed for erosion control, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs.

Landings and trails no longer needed can be "put to bed" by removing high maintenance structures, such as culverts and bridges, and can be restored to a vegetative cover by planting and seeding.

REFERENCES

1. Virginia Department of Forestry, 1978 Revised, Third Edition, "Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality in Virginia Technical Guide".
2. Haussman, Richard F. and Pruett, Emerson W., USDA, Forest Service, NE Forest Exp. Sta., 1973, "Permanent Logging Roads for Better Woodlot Management".
3. Kochenderfer, James N., USDA, Forest Service NE Forest Exp. Sta., Upper Darby, PA, 1970. "Erosion Control on Logging Roads in the Appalachians".

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FOREST HARVEST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

Approved Practice Narratives

(Acre)

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655 D1 Forest Harvest Trails And Landings: A trail located in a forested area will be constructed for the purpose of allowing forest management practices, harvesting and logging of timber and non-timber products or recreational access in a safe manner. Construction will be completed in accordance with the Virginia Conservation Practice Standard *Forest Harvest Trails and Landings* (Code 655).

655 D2 Forest Harvest Trails and Landings: A trail located in a forested area will be constructed for the purposes of a firebreak and a safe access road for fire equipment. Construction will be completed in accordance with the Virginia Conservation Practice Standard *Forest Harvest Trails and Landings* (Code 655).

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